

Finance Committee Pre-Town Meeting/Public Hearing

April 27, 2022 7:00 PM EST
Veterans Memorial Building – Room #229
Millis, MA 02054
Participation Available Via Zoom Remote Platform

Committee Members In Attendance:

Pete Berube, Chair
Jodie Garzon, Vice Chair
Peter Underhill, Clerk
Jim Borgman
Jonathan Loer
Cathy MacInnes
Sara Reyes
John Steadman

Invited Guest:

Michael Guzinski, Town Administrator
Carol Johnston, Finance Director
Pete Jurmain, Select Board Chair
Erin Underhill, Select Board Vice Chair
Donna Cabibbo, Town Moderator
Lisa Hardin, Town Clerk
Kathi Smith, Assistant Town Clerk
Jim Duffy, Millis Resident
Ellen Rosenfeld, Millis Resident

Pete Berube called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Pete Berube Opened the Pre-Town Meeting/Public Hearing at 7:03 PM.

Pete Jurmain called the Select Board Meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Pre-Town Meeting is held after residents have received and had an opportunity to review the Finance Committee Report which outlines the Warrant Articles to be considered at Town Meeting and the Finance Committee’s Recommendations. The Finance Committee discusses, deliberates and votes on each Warrant Article. The attendees at Town Meeting ultimately decide what is approved. Two Warrant Articles, #2 and #10 have yet to be voted on due to identifying the dollar amount and funding.

Review May 2022 Town Meeting Warrant Articles and Recommendations:

Article #1 Unpaid Bills

Jim Borgman: This article funds bills incurred in previous Fiscal Years. The bills for this Town Meeting total \$3,463.51. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #2 Transfer of Funds for FY22 Additional Wages and Expenses

Peter Underhill: This article authorizes transfers of FY22 funds via Inter-Departmental Transfer to fund various departments through the end of the Fiscal Year. The most significant transfer is to cover Public Safety Staffing, \$118,354.53, due to Police Officers and Fire Fighters out on injury as well as \$31,738.18 for the Town’s General Insurance.

Peter Underhill made a motion to transfer from:

- Town General Government: \$101,838.15
- Health and Human Services: \$ 14,484.46
- Culture and Recreation: \$ 20,000.00
- Public Works: \$ 7,398.01
- Employee Benefits: \$ 6,372.09
- Total: \$150,092.71

To:		
• General Insurance:		\$ 31,738.18
• Public Safety :		<u>\$118,354.53</u>
Total:		<u>\$150,092.71</u>

Jodie Garzon amended the motion to recommend approval of; John Steadman seconded.

Discussion: Pete Berube clarified the article requires no further funding; it simply gives the Town authority to transfer funds to balance the FY22 Operating Budget. Cathy MacInnes noted while it's understandable that Police and Fire and Rescue Departments require additional funding for overtime costs due to injury, it appears the amount keeps growing each year.

Carol Johnston reminded the committee that a Reserve Fund was established at the November 2021 Town Meeting to cover Police and Fire and Rescue costs for injuries/workers compensation however no funds were allocated. Unlike typical Worker Compensation claims, Fire Fighters and Police Officers are paid 100% of their salary when out on injury due to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts IIF Fund: <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter41/Section111F> On average, the town pays \$95,000.00 per year for Worker Compensation for the Police and Fire and Rescue Departments.

Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Article #3 FY23 Operating Budget

Pete Berube: This article appropriates funding necessary to operate the Town of Millis for Fiscal Year 2023. The Finance Committee has reviewed all Department Budget Requests and has voted to approve Article #3 in the amount of \$39,781,035.00. Each line item of the Operating Budget will be reviewed and voted on at Town Meeting. The committee has considered all additional funding to the Operating Budget and hopes it generates discussion at Town Meeting. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #4: Town of Millis and SEIU Local 888, Professional Firefighters of Millis Local #4704 and AFSCME Council 93 Local 3901

Sara Reyes: This Article will fund the estimated first-year costs in the amount of \$115,000.00 contained in the Collected Bargaining Agreements. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #5 Sewer Enterprise Fund

Jodie Garzon: This article appropriates funding, including funds for personnel costs, contract expenses, and debt service, necessary to operate the Town's Sewer System and Infrastructure. The Sewer Enterprise is funded by User Fees based on metered or estimated usage. The total amount budgeted for FY23 is \$1,766,855.00. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #6 Water Enterprise Fund

Jodie Garzon: This article appropriates funding, including funds for personnel costs, contract expenses, and debt service, necessary to operate the Town's Water System and Infrastructure. The total amount for FY23 is \$2,494,228.00. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #7 Stormwater Enterprise Fund

Jodie Garzon: This article appropriates funding, including funds for personnel costs, contract expenses, and debt service, necessary to operate the Town's Stormwater System in the amount of \$630,273.00. The Stormwater Management System is driven by mandates by the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and is based on Imperious Area for each property in Millis. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #8 Consent Agenda

John Steadman: These four items require annual approval:

- Amendments to the Personnel Plan Salary Schedule A for non-union employees.
- Board of Health authority to appoint any of its members to another town office or position for which it has appointing authority.
- Authorize the use of Revolving Funds separate from the Operating Budget. The Revolving Funds may spend their revenues without additional appropriations up to the limits authorized at Town Meeting.
- Funds to appropriate a sum of money for the Community Preservation Act adopted in 2007; an additional 1% of Real Estate Assessments are used to fund Administrative Costs and various reserves for Historic, Community Housing, Open Space and Recreation Projects.

It was noted that while the Recreation Department Revolving Fund will be dissolved as of July 1, 2022, the Recreation Director and Recreation Committee fully support this change. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #9 Community Preservation, Pickleball Soundproofing

Jon Loer: This article appropriates \$21,035.16 from the Community Preservation Open Space/Recreation Reserve Fund to soundproof the Pickleball/Tennis Courts. The Recreation Department has requested this project in an effort to reduce the noise to abutting neighbors. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #10 Funding of an Inventory and Management Plan for Town Owned Properties

John Steadman: This article will be presented to the Community Preservation Committee to request funding for a strategic plan for Town Owned Properties. The Community Preservation Committee is meeting on April 28, 2022 to discuss, deliberate and vote on funding this article. The Finance Committee will make its recommendation at Town Meeting.

Article #11 Funding of Trail Improvements at Oak Grove Farm

John Steadman: Oak Grove Farm is a great asset to the town. This article will authorize funding of \$16,900.00 from the Community Preservation Open Space Reserve Fund to ensure the trails are safe for the public. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this Article.

Article #12 FY23 Recertification Process

Sara Reyes: This Article will fund the second half of the State Recertification Audit in the amount of \$17,800.00 from Free Cash. The first half of the audit was funded at the May 2021 Town Meeting. The Recertification Audit is required by the MA Department of Revenue and is conducted every 5 years. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #13 Capital Items

Pete Berube: A Capital Items Article is considered at both the Spring and Fall Town Meetings to appropriate funds for necessary Capital Items. The May 2022 Town Meeting will vote to approve funding (5) Capital Items in the amount of \$264,095.00:

- Public Safety Radio Console Update \$112,580.00
- Public Safety Radio Backup Generator \$ 25,000.00
- DPW Chevy Silverado with Plow \$ 54,416.00
- DPW Skid Steer \$ 52,699.00
- DPW Message Board \$ 19,400.00

Capital Item Requests are presented to the Capital Planning Committee and are prioritized based on various factors; public safety, benefit to the community, etc. The Capital Planning Committee is comprised of representatives from the Select Board, School Committee and Finance Committee as well as residents; Jon Barry as Chair and Jim McCaffrey as a Member at Large. The committee makes its recommendations to the Select Board who decide what items are placed on the Town Meeting Warrant for consideration at Town Meeting; consideration is given to the available resources/funding for each item. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #14 PFAS Water Treatment Bonding Amendment

Cathy MacInnes: This article would appropriate an additional \$500,000.00 in contingency funds for the construction of a Water Treatment Plant to mitigate PFAS in the Town's Drinking Water System. After Bid Openings for the project, the initial appropriation at the November 8, 2021 Town Meeting was found to be insufficient. Jodie Garzon noted the Warrant Article does not reference what Fall Town Meeting the initial borrowing was approved; Mike Guzinski clarified Bond Counsel has approved the wording. This article will be funded by Water Enterprise Fund Borrowing. ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds will cover \$2.3 million dollars of the project. The Select Board is actively seeking State and Federal Funding for the project. Jodie Garzon noted that authorizing the borrowing for a project does not necessarily mean the project will cost that much; in some cases, a Bond Premium Release will be seen after the project is complete. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #15 Design and construction of Sidewalks and Roads

Jodie Garzon: This article would fund engineering and surveying services for the design for improving and adding sidewalks to the southbound side of Plain Street and Pleasant Street and would provide funds for the maintenance of roads throughout the town in the amount of \$160,000.00. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #16 Tree Removal/Maintenance

Cathy MacInnes: This article will appropriate \$50,000.00 from Free Cash for the continued removal of dangerous trees throughout town. The Town and Tree Warden have taken a proactive approach in the last several years to address this concern. It is anticipated that future years will not require as much funding. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #17 New Computer Lease – Year One

Sara Reyes: This article authorizes the town to enter into a 3-year lease for the Millis School Department. The lease would provide iPads for Kindergarten and First Grade Students. The total cost of the 3-year lease is \$69,900. The first-year cost of \$23,300 is included in Article #3, FY23 Operating Budget. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #18 Lease to Purchase two Police Cruisers

Sara Reyes: This Article will authorize the town to enter into a lease to purchase agreement for two new replacement Police Cruisers in the amount of \$104,000. Similar to Article #17, the annual cost is included in the FY23 Operating Budget. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

It was noted that Articles #17 and 18 were typically funded by Free Cash however in a concerted effort by the Capital Planning Committee, Finance Committee and Select Board, they have been included in the Operating Budget. Both articles are simply giving the town authority to enter into the lease agreements.

Article #19 General Bylaw – Powers and Duties Town Administrator

Peter Underhill: This Article would amend the Town's Bylaw Article V Section 31 establishing Powers and Duties of the Town Administrator. All changes were reviewed and approved by the Charter Review Committee. These changes would be in addition to the already established Powers and Duties within the Millis Town Charter Section III-4. This allows for greater flexibility to change the duties of the Town Administrator at Town Meeting as a result of the developing needs of the community. The core responsibilities and duties of the Town Administrator would still be contained within the Town Charter. Mike Guzinski confirmed this practice is common and provides broader guidance of the Powers and Duties of a Town Administrator which is limited in the Town Charter; the Town Administrator would still report to the Select Board. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #20 Charter Amendment – Change Town Clerk to Appointed

Peter Underhill: This article is not a reflection on the current Town Clerk but rather a gateway to the future to ensure the town appoints a licensed and experienced individual to fulfill the important role of Town Clerk. An Elected Town Clerk does not require licensing or knowledge for the position. An appointed Town Clerk would report directly to the Town Administrator similar to the DPW Director, Fire and Rescue Chief and Police Chief. If approved at the May 2022 Town Meeting, it would then be put forth to voters at the May 2023 Town Election. Mike Guzinski confirmed as towns progress, the position of Town Clerk is usually appointed in an effort to bring professionalism to the role. Ellen Rosenfield inquired if neighboring towns have appointed or elected Town Clerks; the information was not readily available. Lisa Hardin, Millis Town Clerk, gave an overview of the history of Town Clerks throughout the Commonwealth; Millis is the only town that does not have a Full-Time Salaried Town Clerk. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #21 Zoning Bylaw – Amend Associate Planning Board Member

Cathy MacInnes: This article will authorize the Associate Planning Board Member to vote on Site Plans when a quorum of Elected Planning Board Members is not present. An Associate Planning Board Member may currently vote on Special Permit Applications and this will extend their authority to also vote on Site Plans. Pete Berube requested the Town Clerk's inquisition on this Warrant Article be sent in writing in order to have Town Counsel clarify. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #22 Zoning Bylaw – Add I-P-2 District to Tables 2 & 3

Cathy MacInnes: This article will amend Tables 2 and 3 of the Town of Millis Zoning By-Law to include Zoning Board District I-P-2, which was omitted in the printing of the tables in the Zoning By-laws due to an oversight. It was noted the table was misaligned in the Town Meeting Warrant, handouts at Town Meeting will be provided to better demonstrate the change. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #23 Authorization for Consolidated Town Facilities Maintenance

Jim Borgman: This Article will authorize the consolidation of Town Facilities Maintenance, including Municipal and School Buildings. It will require a Majority Vote by the School Committee. Funding sources to do so are included in Article #3. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #24 Unemployment Insurance

Jon Loer: This article would appropriate \$10,275.00 for the Town's Unemployment Fund. The town abides by the Commonwealth's Guidelines for Unemployment Claims. The Finance Committee recommends approval of this article.

Article #25 Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Fund

Jon Loer: This article would add funds to the Other Post-Employment Benefits Fund. Currently the town is covering claims as needed out of the General Operating Budget, but should be setting aside additional funds for future OPEB obligations. The Finance Committee recommends dismissal of this article due to lack of funding at this time.

Article #26 Stabilization Fund

Jim Borgman: The Finance Committee recommends dismissal of this article until the November 2022 Town Meeting due to lack of funding at this time.

Article #27 Petition Article (Amend Town of Millis Home Rule Charter for Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners)

Pete Berube: This is a petitioned article proposing an amendment to the Home Rule Charter in order to authorize an Elected Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners. The proposal is for a three member board. Currently, the Select Board are the Water and Sewer Commissioners deciding Water and Sewer Rates, infrastructure for the Water and Sewer System, etc.. A vote to dismiss requires a majority vote; a vote to approve requires 2/3. The Finance Committee recommends dismissal of this article.

Article #28 Petition Article (Amend General Bylaws for Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners)

Pete Berube: This is a petitioned article proposing an amendment of the General Bylaws in order to define an Elected Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners. This article requires a majority vote. The Finance Committee recommends dismissal of this article.

The two above articles would be the first step in establishing a Water and Sewer Commission. The Finance Committee had lengthy discussions on both articles and voted 5/4 to dismiss each. There will be a Minority Report presented at Town Meeting by the dissenting members. Jim Duffy inquired what the reasoning was for the Finance Committee vote to dismiss. There will be in depth discussion at Town Meeting. There have been several Public Meetings and discussions on the articles weighing the pros and cons of a Water and Sewer Commission. Jim Duffy felt the Finance Committee Report did not outline the details of both articles to make an informed decision. A Public Meeting took place at the Veterans Memorial Building in Room #229 to discuss the articles and for resident inquiries, concerns, etc. Millis Community Media has most Public Meetings available on their website www.millismedia.org Finance Committee Meeting Minutes are available on their website <https://www.millisma.gov/node/218/minutes>

If the motion to dismiss does not receive a majority vote, a motion would need to be made to approve the article. Article #27 and #28 will voted on separately.

Pete Berube closed the Finance Committee Pre-Town Meeting/Public Hearing at 8:17 PM.

Review Town Meeting Procedures

The Finance Committee will be seated on the Auditorium Stage and will meet prior to Town Meeting at 7:00 PM in Room #104 of the Middle/High School. Pete Berube outlined the procedures and reminded everyone to read the motion verbatim. Town Department Heads, the School Committee, and Town Counsel will be available if there are questions that cannot be answered by the committee. Donna Cabibbo clarified that if a participant makes a motion to "move the questions" that will be voted on prior to a vote to approve or dismiss an article. Committee members have the option of voicing their opinions/questions as a private citizen, simply go to one of the microphones in the audience. Jodie Garzon noted that the FY23 Operating Budget has to balance at the close of Town Meeting; if there is a are motion to change the budget, the Finance Committee could reconsider the OPEB and Stabilization Fund Articles to balance the budget.

Approve Bills Payable

Jodie Garzon made a motion to recommend approval of payment to Our Town Publishing in the amount of \$6,916.00 for printing costs of the Finance Committee Report; Cathy MacInnes seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Adjourn Select Board Meeting

Pete Jurmain made a motion to adjourn the Select Board Meeting at 8:34 PM; Erin Underhill seconded. Vote: 2/0 motion carries unanimously.

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Approval:

Jodie Garzon made a motion to approve the April 13, 2022 Finance Committee's Meeting Minutes; Cathy MacInnes seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Adjourn Meeting:

Jodie Garzon made a motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 8:37 PM; Cathy MacInnes seconded. Vote: 8/0 motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Gilmore

DRAFT